

In the Claims:

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended).

A cutting instrument, comprising
an outer member having an opening that includes a cutting edge; and
a helical knife coupled to the outer member for rotation relative to the outer member, at least a portion of the helical knife having an edge configured to slice into tissue, the portion extending through the opening and extending distally beyond the cutting edge of the outer member.

Claim 2 (Original).

The instrument of claim 1, further comprising
an inner member received within the outer member, the helical knife being located at a distal end of the inner member.

Claim 3 (Original).

The instrument of claim 2 wherein a clearance between the inner member and the outer member is in the range of about 0.0005 to 0.002 inches.

Claim 4 (Original).

The instrument of claim 2 wherein the inner member defines an aspiration opening, the aspiration opening being located at a proximal end of the helical knife.

Claim 5 (Previously Amended).

The instrument of claim 1 wherein the edge comprises a helical edge and the helical knife includes a helical channel.

Claim 6 (Original).

The instrument of claim 5 wherein the helical channel has a proximal end, a distal end, and a pitch, the pitch of the helical channel increasing from the distal end to the proximal end.

Claim 7 (Original).

The instrument of claim 5 wherein the helical channel terminates in an opening through a wall of the inner member.

Claim 8 (Original).

The instrument of claim 1, further comprising a hub coupling the inner member to the outer member.

Claim 9 (Original).

The instrument of claim 1 wherein the outer member defines a fluid ingress opening through a wall of the outer member in a distal region of the outer member.

Claim 10 (Original).

The instrument of claim 1 wherein the cutting edge is located at a distal end of the outer member.

Claim 11 (Original).

The instrument of claim 1 wherein the outer member tapers to the cutting edge.

Claim 12 (Original).

The instrument of claim 1 wherein the cutting edge comprises a circumferential cutting edge.

Claim 13 (Original).

The instrument of claim 12 wherein the cutting edge is circular in shape.

Claim 14 (Original).

The instrument of claim 1 wherein the cutting edge is part-circumferential.

Claim 15 (Original).

The instrument of claim 14 wherein the cutting edge is circular in shape.

Claim 16 (Original).

The instrument of claim 14 wherein the cutting edge is oblong in shape.

Claim 17 (Original).

The instrument of claim 1 wherein the outer member includes a shield portion extending distally from the cutting edge.

Claim 18 (Original).

A method of cutting, comprising
slicing into tissue with a helical knife to draw tissue proximally toward a cutting portion; and
cutting the tissue with the cutting portion.

Claim 19 (Original).

The method of claim 18, wherein cutting the tissue comprises cutting the tissue into discrete pieces.

Claim 20 (Original).

The method of claim 18, further comprising providing the helical knife on an inner member and the cutting portion on an outer member.

Claim 21 (Original).

The method of claim 20, further comprising transporting the cut tissue along a helical channel defined by the helical knife.

Claim 22 (Original).

The method of claim 21, further comprising aspirating the cut tissue through a hollow interior in the inner member.

Claim 23 (Original).

The method of claim 22 wherein aspirating the cut tissue comprises aspirating the cut tissue through an opening in a wall of the inner member.

Claim 24 (Original).

The method of claim 20, further comprising aspirating fluid through an opening in the outer member.